

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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SUBJ: UNFDAC PROGRAM IN THAILAND

REF: A. BANGKOK 5336; B. STATE 065459

1. APPRECIATE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON REF PROGRAM.

2. AGRICULTURE PROGRAM IS NOW SLOWLY BEGINNING TO MAKE PROGRESS. MISSION OFFICIALS RECENTLY VISITED SITE OF EXPERIMENTAL STATION AND TRAINING SCHOOL AND FOUND MUCH ACTIVITY IN EVIDENCE. RTG AGENCIES ARE COOPERATING WITH UNFDAC ON AD HOC BASIS WHICH BODES WELL FOR ITS FUTURE. A PLAN OF OPERATIONS IS EXPECTED TO BE SIGNED SHORTLY FOR THE REHABILITATION ASPECT OF THE PROJECT.

3. SPECIFIC ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS RAISED REF (B) FOLLOWS:

A. EFFECTIVNESS UNFDAP OPERATIONS STILL TO BE DEMONSTRATED. SINCE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED FIFTEEN MONTHS AGO PROJECT HAS ESTABLISHED AN OFFICE IN CHIANG MAI, BROKEN GROUND FOR THE TRAINING FARM AND TRAINED VILLAGE TEAMS WHICH AT THIS DATE ARE STILL NOT PERMANENTLY IN THE

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FIELD. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE , NEARLY A YEAR WAS WASTED BY BUREAUCRATIC IN- FIGHTING AMONG VARIOUS UN AGENCIES. SINCE BASIC JURISDICTIONAL ISSUES RESOLVED, MUCH ENERGY HAS STILL BEEN WASTED ON INSIGNIFICANT DETAIL AND POOR PLANNING , ALTHOUGH THIS IN PART IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO FIRST- TIME NATURE OF PROJECT.

B. PROJECT MANAGER MANN IS EXCELLENT AGRICULTURALIST WITH EXHAUSTIVE KNOWLEDGE OF HILLTRIBES. HE IS OFTEN FRUSTRATED BY COMPLICATED ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES WHICH AROSE AS RESULT OF UNCERTAIN STATUS OF UNFDAC IN THAILAND. (COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN UNFDAC AND UNDP BROKE DOWN 12 MONTHS AGO. RELATIONS ARE NOW COOL AND PROPER.) MR. WILLIAMS, UNFDAC PROJECT DIRECTOR, WITH LITTLE APPARENT EXPERIENCE IN DEVELOPMENT WORK, IS VALIANTLY ATTEMPTING TO MAKE THE PROJECT WORK. SUPPORT (CUSTOMS CLEARANCE, ETC.) IS BEING RECEIVED FROM ECAFE AND APPEARS ADEQUATE.

C. THAI COOPERATION ADEQUATE. UNFDAC IS PAYING VIRTUALLY ALL LOCAL COSTS AND WITH RARE EXCEPTION (VILLAGE TEAMS) THAI CONTRIBUTION IS AD HOC AND VOLUNTARY. REGULAR GOVERNMENT AGENCY PARTICIPATION HAS NOT BEEN SOLICITED BUT WILL BE REQUIRED IF PROJECT IS TO CONTINUE AFTER THE LIFE OF THE AGREEMENT. IF COMMITMENT IS MEASURED BY AMOUNTS OF FUNDS AND FULL TIME COLLEAGUES PROVIDED IT MUST BE CONCLUDED THAT RTG COMMITMENT TO THE UN PROJECT IS MINIMAL.

D. OBJECTIVES OF PROGRAM ARE SOUND. IT IS AN EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM WITH SO FAR NO INTENTION OF INSTITUTION BUILDING. MISSION WOULD PREFER AN INSTITUTION BUILDING BIAS, GIVEN THE SIZE OF THE JOB TO BE DONE AND NEED TO INVOLVE LINE MINISTRIES. GIVEN THE LIMITED RESOURCES OF UNFDAC IN BOTH MEN AND MONEY, HOWEVER, IT MUST BE CONCLUDED THAT THE SMALL EXPERIMENTAL UNDERTAKING IS VALID.

E. BY END OF PROJECT AFTER FIVE YEARS UNFDAC PROJECT WILL HAVE GAINED EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH INCOME SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM AND IMPROVING LIVING CONDITIONS FOR SEVERAL HUNDRED HILLTRIBE PEOPLE, AND HOPEFULLY WILL HAVE SUCCEEDED IN CURTAILING OPIUM PRODUCTION IN KEY AND SATELLITE VILLAGES WHICH ARE PART OF THE PROJECT. PROJECT MANAGER MANN BELIEVES THAT AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF TRAINING KEY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HE CAN EXPAND THE PROGRAM TO INCLUDE MANY MORE OF THE ESTIMATED 900-1200 OPIUM GROWING VILLAGES IN NORTH THAILAND. IF THIS IS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED WE BELIEVE REGULAR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES SHOULD BE ASKED TO PARTICIPATE WELL BEFORE THAT DATE. THIS PARTICIPATION SHOULD NECESSARILY INCLUDE SIGNIFICANT INPUTS OF RTG FUNDS AND CIVIL SERVANTS. MOREOVER, THE LONG RANGE EFFECTIVENESS OF ANY INCOME SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM

REQUIRES A MORE SYSTEMATIC APPROACH SUCH AS SUGGESTED IN
TOAID A-177 TO SUPPLEMENT THIS NECESSARILY AD HOC BEGINNING
EXPERIMENT .
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